



SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE

5560 Overland Avenue | Suite 400, San Diego | CA 92123-1204

www.sdcountyfire.org

SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Monday, November 17, 2025 | 1:00 p.m. | San Diego County Fire Office, Balboa Room

AGENDA

- I. CALL TO ORDER
 - A. Pledge of Allegiance
 - B. Roll Call
 - C. Declaration of Quorum
 - D. Introductions
- II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: Members of the public may address the Board on any subject matter within its assigned purview and not on the agenda. Please notify County staff prior to the meeting.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 8, 2025 **(VOTE)**
- IV. MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT
 - A. Fire Chief's Update
 - B. Director's Update
- V. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. San Diego County Consolidated Fire Code Update—Pending Board of Supervisors Action
 - B. Authority to Enter into an Assistance by Hire Agreement with CAL FIRE—Pending Board of Directors Action
 - C. Emergency Medical Services Corp Grant Acceptance—Pending Board of Supervisors Action
 - D. Authority to Accept Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Funding for Hazardous Fuels Reduction—Pending Board of Supervisors Action
 - E. Authority to Accept Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Funding for the Wildfire Mitigation Home Hardening Project—Pending Board of Supervisors Action
 - F. Establish the 2026 Fire Advisory Board Meeting Schedule
- VI. NEXT MEETING
 - A. Monday, TBD at 1:00 pm at the San Diego County Fire Office – 5560 Overland Ave, Suite 400, Balboa Room, San Diego CA 92123 (County Operations Center).
- VII. ADJOURNMENT

Written materials distributed to the Fire Advisory Board in connection with this agenda will be made available to the public less than 72 hours before the meeting at the Office of San Diego County Fire.

ASSISTANCE FOR THE DISABLED

If you are planning on attending this meeting and need special accommodations, please contact County Fire staff at least 24 hours before the meeting. Individuals requiring sign language interpreters should contact the Americans with Disabilities Coordinator at (858) 505-6521, in advance of the meeting.



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For meeting information, please contact:

San Diego County Fire

TEL: (619) 455-1819

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Monday, September 8, 2025 | 1:00 P.M.

MINUTES

Members

Jason Shanley
VACANT
Debra Foster
Randy Lyle
Ben Tullock
John Clark
Jesse Robles
Bret Sealey
Clifford Kellog

District 1 – Seat 1 (absent)
District 2 – Seat 2
District 2 – Seat 3
District 2 – Seat 4
District 2 – Seat 5, Chair
District 3 – Seat 6 (absent)
District 4 – Seat 7
District 5 – Seat 8
District 5 – Seat 9 Vice Chair

Guest

County Staff

Tony Mecham
Jeff Collins
Marc Regier
Ryan Silva
David Sibbet
Jenny Le

CALFIRE/Chief
County Fire/Director
County Fire/Assistant Director
CALFIRE/Deputy Chief Community Risk Reduction
County Fire/Fire Services Coordinator
County Fire/Admin Secretary



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- I. CALL TO ORDER at 1:00 pm.
 - A. The group recited the Pledge of Allegiance.
 - B. Roll call was taken.
 - C. A quorum was declared present with seven (6) members in attendance, (2) absent.
 - D. Jenny Le, Administrative Secretary for County Fire, was introduced.

- II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION
There was no public communication.

- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF MAY 12, 2025 (VOTE)

ON MOTION of Member Lyle, seconded by Member Kellogg, the Advisory Board approved the minutes of May 12, 2025. Motion carried.

AYES: 6 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2 ABSTAIN: 0

- IV. CHIEFS REPORT

- A. Fire Chief's Update – Tony Mecham
 - Updates were provided for the following:
 - Staffing
 - Apparatus
 - Facilities
 - Budget
 - Hard copies of the 2024 Standards of Cover were handed out
- B. Director's Update – Jeff Collins
 - Updates were provided for the following:
 - Budget
 - Apparatus
 - Staffing
 - Facilities

- V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Mandated Fire Inspection Reporting for Fiscal Year 2024-25 – Pending Board of Directors Action

The State code requires the San Diego County Fire Protection District to perform annual inspections on all buildings used as a school, apartment complex, group care facility, residential care facility, commercial space, office complex, jails, law enforcement station, lodging unit, and day care facility. County Fire, on behalf of the San Diego County Fire Protection District, completed 100% of the 286 State-mandated inspections in the San Diego County and Deer Springs Fire Protection Districts in Fiscal Year 2024-25. In addition, staff conducted 1,222 non-mandated business inspections in the same time period.

ON MOTION of Member Kellogg, seconded by Member Lyle, the Advisory Board voted to support the findings.

AYES: 6 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2 ABSTAIN: 0



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B. County Fire's Proposed Helicopter Acquisition and Operational Plan – Pending Board of Supervisors Action

In January 2025, the Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Administrative Officer to identify funds to purchase a night-flying helicopter for San Diego County Fire (County Fire) to staff and conduct night-time water drops on wildland fires in our region. CAL FIRE, County Fire's operational partner for fire protection and emergency medical services, has fully transitioned to the Sikorsky S70 Firehawk and maintains 16 of these in their fleet for aerial firefighting. The Sikorsky S70 Firehawk has been determined by County Fire staff to be the most effective helicopter platform for attacking wildland fires.

CAL FIRE, at the State-level, has determined a need to increase aerial resources in San Diego County for wildland fire protection. The State has proposed that if the County purchases a Sikorsky S70 Firehawk, then CAL FIRE will cover all staffing, fuel, and maintenance costs. San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) recently purchased a Sikorsky S70 Firehawk but no longer has a need for it and has offered to sell it to the County for their actual costs of \$32,275,000. In addition, \$6 million is needed to retrofit the helicopter to meet CAL FIRE's operational standards.

As part of the Fiscal Year 2025-27 Adopted Operational Plan, \$14 million was included to purchase a night-flying helicopter. In addition, SDG&E would contribute ongoing funding of \$3.3 million to County Fire's aerial firefighting program, subject to California Public Utilities Commission approval in future years. If the Board approves County Fire's proposed plan, the new firefighting helicopter would be available by summer 2026.

Lastly, County Fire has an existing agreement with SDG&E to provide aerial resources that County Fire/CAL FIRE can direct to emerging wildland fire threats. The Board of Supervisors is being asked to extend that agreement for additional years.

ON MOTION of Member Kellogg, seconded by Member Foster, the Advisory Board voted to support County Fire Staff's recommendations to: 1) Approve a single source contract to purchase SDG&E's Sikorsky S70 Firehawk helicopter for \$32,275,000; 2) Authorize a single source contract with United Rotorcraft to outfit the Sikorsky S70 Firehawk to meet CAL FIRE's standards for \$6 million; 3) Authorize County Fire to accept revenue of up to \$5 million annually from the State of California; United States Government, and SDG&E to support the helicopter program; 4) Extend the current agreement with SDG&E for regional aerial resources through July 31, 2032.

AYES: 6 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 2 ABSTAIN: 0

C. New Building Lease for County Fire's EMS Bureau – Information

County Fire, in partnership with CAL FIRE, provides around-the-clock fire protection and emergency medical services at 21 fire stations throughout the San Diego County Fire Protection District (SDCFPD). In addition, County Fire and AMR staff 16 frontline ambulances in the SDCFPD's Ground Ambulance Service Area that also includes the Deer Springs, Alpine, Valley Center, and a portion of the San Miguel Fire Protection Districts. In total over 425 paramedics provide advanced life support (ALS) care on behalf of the County. The rapid growth in paramedic-level care has exceeded County Fire's current space for training and equipment storage. The Department of General Services will be going before the Board of Supervisors to request approval for a lease on behalf of County Fire.



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A report was received from County Fire staff.

- D. County of San Diego Efforts to Address Fire Apparatus Antitrust and Monopolistic Practices – Information

In April, the Board of Supervisors directed the Chief Administrative Officer and County Counsel to explore legal and advocacy options related to fire apparatus antitrust and monopolistic practices. County Fire, consistent with other fire agencies in California and the nation, have been experiencing significant cost increases and production delays of new vehicles. In August, County staff returned to the Board to provide an update and seek Board direction for next steps.

A report was received from County Fire staff.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next Fire Advisory Board meeting will be held on Monday, November 17, 2025, at 1:00 pm at the San Diego County Fire Office (County Operations Center) – 5560 Overland Ave, Ste 400, Balboa Rm, San Diego 92123.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Advisory Board adjourned at 2:20 pm.

NOTE: These Minutes set forth all action taken by the Advisory Board on the matters stated, but not necessarily in the chronological sequence in which the matters were taken up.

For meeting information, please contact:

San Diego County Fire

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San Diego County Consolidated Fire Code Update—Pending Board of Supervisors Action

On July 1, 2025, the State of California adopted the California Fire Code. County Fire staff, on behalf of the San Diego County Fire Protection District, worked closely with the other fire protection districts to determine if any changes were needed for an updated San Diego County Consolidated Fire Code (CFC). Attachment A summarizes the changes from the current CFC to the proposed one. County Fire engaged several stakeholder groups on proposed changes and has posted the CFC to the County Fire website to receive feedback. The updated CFC is anticipated to be presented to the Board of Supervisors on January 26, 2026.

Recommendation: Support County Fire’s recommended changes to the Consolidated Fire Code.

Authority to Enter into an Assistance by Hire Agreement with CAL FIRE—Pending Board of Directors Action

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) occasionally uses resources from local government agencies for its incident operations, using “Assistance-by-Hire” (ABH) requests for the needed equipment or personnel. The use of ABH agreements allow participating government agencies to receive reimbursement for resources deployed to assist with protecting the State Responsibility Area lands from wildland fires. This request will authorize the continued execution of ABH revenue agreements with CAL FIRE for County-provided fire protection and emergency medical services.

Recommendation: Support County Fire’s recommendation to authorize a new agreement with CAL FIRE for Assistance by Hire.

Emergency Medical Services Corp Grant Acceptance—Pending Board of Supervisors Action

In 2024, San Diego County Fire was awarded \$1.3 million grant from the California’s Employment Development Department (EDD) to establish an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Corp program for 60 transitional aged youth (18-26). The program prioritized individuals who have been impacted by the child welfare and/or juvenile justice systems. EMS Corp was first launched in Alameda County in 2008 and has been highly successful. More than 400 young adults have graduated from the program in Alameda County and over 85% remain employed in EMS or a related field. While active in EMS Corp, students receive 380 hours of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) employment (double the minimum hours), wraparound support with purchasing equipment, transportation, ride alongs, mentorship, monthly stipends and career readiness.

In July, County Fire and Southwestern College launched cohort 1 of the EDD grant funding. Approximately 20 students are active in the program and anticipated to graduate in December. Cohort 2 will launch in January. Also in July, San Diego Workforce Partnership released a grant for job training specific to fire and EMS careers. County Fire applied for \$500,000 to expand EMS Corp to inland North County in partnership with Palomar College, fire protection agencies, and private

EMS companies. On October 23, 2025, Workforce Partnership had a scheduled meeting for their Policy Board with grant approval recommendations that included County Fire's proposal. That meeting was cancelled, and the next scheduled Policy Board meeting is on November 21, 2025. It is anticipated that Workforce Partnership staff's recommendation for County Fire to receive \$500,000 in grant funds will be presented for approval.

Recommendation: If approved by Workforce Partnership's Policy Board, support County Fire's request to the Board of Supervisors to accept \$500,000 in San Diego Workforce Partnership grant funding to expand EMS Corp to inland North County.

Authority to Accept Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Funding for Hazardous Fuels Reduction — Pending Board of Supervisors Action

On September 15, 2025, County Fire submitted a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) application requesting \$1.57 million to reduce wildfire risk in the unincorporated county. If awarded, the project will implement hazardous fuels reduction treatments across 201 acres of County-owned parks, preserves, and roadside corridors located in High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Treatments will include:

- Hand crew thinning and brushing on 98.6 acres in 12 County parks and preserves,
- Prescribed grazing on 49.2 acres across 3 preserves, and
- Roadside vegetation management along seven one-way-in, one-way-out rural roads covering 52.9 acres to improve evacuation safety and firefighter access.

These coordinated treatments will directly protect more than 18,500 homes, 34 pieces of critical infrastructure, and approximately 51,500 residents living adjacent to the project areas. The project will be implemented over a 4-year period. County Fire will manage implementation and ensure ongoing maintenance through its existing vegetation management program.

Recommendation: Support County Fire in accepting FEMA HMGP funding for hazardous fuels reduction and authorize the actions necessary to implement the grant.

Authority to Accept Federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Funding for the Wildfire Mitigation Home Hardening Project — Pending Board of Supervisors Action

County Fire continues implementing the California Wildfire Mitigation Program (CWMP) under FEMA disaster DR-4558, which is currently in its extension phase through July 11, 2027. This new grant would enable the program to support an additional 60 homes beyond the current grant period, maintaining program momentum and leveraging existing assessments, environmental reviews, and contractor capacity. If awarded, the project will provide home hardening retrofits and defensible space improvements for properties in Dulzura, Campo, and Potrero. Treatments will include:

- Home hardening retrofits such as ember-resistant vents, ignition-resistant roofing, siding, decks, and fencing, and dual-pane or tempered glass windows;
- Defensible space creation and maintenance within 0 to 100 feet of homes, including removal of dead vegetation, thinning of brush, and pruning of trees to reduce fire intensity and ember spread.

These measures will directly reduce ignition potential and increase community resilience in areas historically impacted by wildfire. The project will be implemented over a 4-year period. County Fire will manage all phases of implementation and ensure ongoing homeowner coordination and program oversight.

Recommendation: Support County Fire in accepting FEMA HMGP funding for home hardening and defensible space and authorize the actions necessary to implement the grant.

Establish the 2026 Fire Advisory Board Meeting Schedule

To continue providing input for San Diego County Fire Protection District future Board of Directors actions, and County Fire's actions on behalf of fire protection and emergency medical services in our region, a 2026 Fire Advisory Board meeting schedule is needed. County staff has provided four (4) options:

Monday, March 2, 2026

Monday, May 11, 2026

Monday, August 17, 2026

Monday, November 9, 2026